PUDUKKOTTAI STATE
NATIONAL WAR FRONT BUREAU

BULLETIN] MAY 13, 1944 [No. 197

The Editor will gratefully receive contributions, in English or Tamil, of articles on matters of *National War Front interest*, and publish them, if suitable, as signed articles, in the Bulletin. The articles should be short and reach the Editor a week in advance.

LECTURE CXCVII.

THE CARPATHIANS.

(From the News Chronicle).

Nearly 1,900 years ago a force of Roman legionaries marched to within sight of the snow-clad peaks of the Carpathian Mountains. They marched to penetrate the mountain barrier and exact vengeance on a tribe of warlike barbarians, the Dacians.

In a narrow valley within sight of their goal the Dacian hordes fell upon them. The army was cut to pieces.

It was a military disaster. Since then this rugged mountain chain has echoed and re-echoed to the ring of arms and the battle-cries of invading armies. Goths, Huns, Moguls, Slavs fought bitterly in the passes that thread the mountains.

Now another army is knocking at that gate. The advancing Red Army is up against the second greatest mountain barrier in Europe. Beyond stretch the plains of Hungary, the fertile lands of the Danube reaching to Southern Germany.

Sweeping in a semi-circle 800 miles long, the Carpathians form the eastern wing of the central mountain system of Europe. Ranging from 7 to 230 miles in width, they cover an area of 72,600 square miles. Compared to the Alps their peaks are insignificant, the highest being 8,737 feet.

Between Russia and Hungary few of the peaks are higher than 3,500 feet. They remain, however, a formidable barrier.

The passes in this region are the only possible access for invading armies—and they are narrow, easily defendable. Thousands of Russian troops fell there in 1915 in the bitter, indecisive action against the Austro-Hungarians, and wooden crosses strew the

summit of each pass. But a mightier army is now on the move. And they have not forgotten.

In many aspects the Carpathians have remained unchanged since the days of the Romans, Goths and Huns. A vast forest of beeches and pines clothes the mountain slopes up to 4,000 ft. above sea level. Above that, stunted pines and lichens stretch to the snow-line.

In the remoter regions, bears, wolves and lynxes are still a real terror to peasant children. And their parents cling to that dark superstition that created the vampire and the werewolf.

WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY.

(A)—LEADING EVENTS.

2—5—44 (Tuesday).	Allied Sea and Air forces attack the Jap base of *TRUK*. (126 enemy planes shot down).
3—5—44 (Wednesday).	Allies advance in *IMPHAL* area in *INDO-BURMA* border.
4—5—44 (Thursday).	Allies cripple enemy's transport system in *EUROPE*.
5—5—44 (Friday).	Dominion Premiers approve Armistice terms for *GERMANY*.
	R.A.F. Bombers smash *PESCARA* dam on the Adriatic coast of *ITALY*.
6—5—44 (Saturday).	*ITALY*–based R.A.F. bombers raid *PLOESTI* oil-fields in *RUMANIA*.
7—5—44 (Sunday).	Allied aircraft smash *BERLIN* and *BUCHAREST* (Capital of Rumania) by daylight.
	Red Army breaks through the defences of *SEBASTOPOL* in the *CRIMEA*.
8—5—44 (Monday).	Allied aircraft raid *BERLIN* for the second time in daylight. (119 German planes destroyed.)

(B) NEWS IN BRIEF.

Russia.—Wide spread bombing of German airfields and rail junctions in the CRIMEA, is reported. The lull has been broken in several sectors by frequent local skirmishes, especially in the LWOW area. 80 German ships, totalling over 100,000 tons, have been sunk by the Soviet Air Force and the Russian Navy in the Black Sea.

German armies are counter-attacking.

Italy.—Local clashes are continuing. The Germans have flooded the Pontine Marshes, fearing the resumption of an Allied offensive.

Air-War.—Part of the pre-invasion attack is now diverted to storage dumps, as at MAILLY in FRANCE, on May 4. The bombing of communications and of production centres, continues. The targets of the week included the PAS DE CALAIS area, BUDAPEST,

BUCHAREST, BRASOV, PITESTI, CRAIOVA, CAMPINA, and TURNUSEVERIN. The last five are important centres in the Rumanian railway system.

War at Sea.—On April 30, a German convoy of 4 supply ships and five escort craft was successfully attacked by bombers and fighters of the Fleet Air Arm off BODO, S-W. of the LOFOTEN Islands.

Another action between German destroyers and light forces of the Canadian Navy near USHANT Island off the French coast is reported. A German destroyer was set on fire and grounded.

The Pacific.—A large fleet of battleships, cruisers and destroyers, and a flotilla of carriers struck a smashing blow at TRUK in the CAROLINES in a two-day attack, in which 800 tons of bombs were dropped and 125 enemy air-craft were destroyed.

The Allies have made more landings at Torane Bay near HOLLANDIA, and at DEMTA in the DUTCH EAST INDIES.

China.—The Japanese are making an all-out attempt to gain control of the PEKIN—HANKOW railway between CHENGCHOW and SINYANG. The move is intended to link N. CHINA with occupied Central CHINA.

Burma.—Royal Navy Submarines operating in the Bay of Bengal successfully attacked Japanese shipping off the ANDAMANS and in other Far Eastern waters. One Japanese destroyer and 4 supply ships were sunk. Targets at PORT BLAIR were also attacked.

The Allies evacuated PALETWA near the Indian frontier. In the KOHIMA area and the KOHIMA sector the Japs are receiving a severe beating. In the MOGAUNG Valley the Chinese advance continues.

ALLIED AIR RAIDS.

30—4—44. (Sunday).

EUROPE (German occupied).
(18 enemy planes shot down; 5 Allied planes missing).

DAY:—
Military objectives in N. FRANCE.
Railway yards at NANTES, GASSICOURT and BETHUNE.
The airfield at CORMILLES.
Air frame factory at AULNAY.
The airfields at LYONS and CLERMONT-FERRAND.
Military installations in the PAS DE CALAIS area.

NIGHT:—
Ammunition dump at MAINTENON.
Railway yards near PARIS and SOMAIN.
Laying mines in enemy waters.
The railway junction of BREST LITOVSK (occupied Russia).

ITALY.
(12 enemy planes destroyed; 5 Allied planes missing).
Rail yards at MILAN, CASTEL MAGGIORE and ALESSANDRIA.
Aircraft factories at VARESE, MILAN, and BRESCIA.
The airfield at REGGIO EMILIA.
Rail communications in central ITALY.
The ports of GENOA, LEGHORN and MONFALCONE.

RUSSIA.
(48 enemy planes destroyed).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.
(18 Jap planes destroyed).
SCHOVTEN Islands (near N. Guinea)
Airfields and supply dumps at WEWAK (N. Guinea).
Targets at RABAUL (N. Britain), WAKDE Island (Bougainville) and SORONG (D.N. Guinea).
The township of DILLI (Timor).

BURMA.
The Jap base at KALEWA.
KAMAING
Enemy positions rivercraft and railway targets in battle areas.
The airfields at HEHO and AUNGBAN.

1—5—44 (Monday).

EUROPE (German occupied).

DAY:—
Railway yards at HAINE, ST. PIERRE and NAMUR.
Other railway yards in FRANCE and BELGIUM.
Marshalling yards at BRUSSELS and RHEIMS.

NIGHT:—
(10 Allied planes missing).
Motor works at LYONS.
An aircraft plant near PARIS.
Railway yards in BELGIUM.
LUDWIGSHAFEN (Germany).
The railway junction at LWOW (occupied Poland).

ITALY.
Rail targets in ROME area.
A factory near POPOLO.
A dump at STIMIGLIANO.

Railway installations on the east and west coasts of ITALY.

Shipping in PLOCA harbour.
Motor transport vehicles N.W. of METKOVIC.
Targets at SPEZIA and GENOA.
Installations at LEGHORN and ALESSANDRIA.

RUSSIA.

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.

The Jap Naval and Air base at TRUK.
PONAPE.
Supply areas at WEWAK (N. Guinea).
A Jap vessel off BIAKL Island.
Airfields and supply areas at RABAUL (N. Britain).
WOLEAI and MARIAON Islands (Carolines).

BURMA.

Oil installations at YENANGYAUNG.
Targets in the ARAKAN, KALADAN, MAYU and CHINDWIN Valley areas.

2—5—44 (Tuesday).
EUROPE (German occupied).

DAY:—
Railway communications in FRANCE and BELGIUM.
Railway junctions of TREGNIER, LEMANS and AULNOYE.
Military objectives in the PAS DE CALAIS area.
An airfield on DUTCH-BELGIUM border.

NIGHT:—
Industrial targets at LEVERKUSEN.
The Railway junctions and trains at LWOW and SAMBOR (Both in Poland).

ITALY.

(6 Allied planes are missing).
Railway communications in North and Central ITALY.
Bridges at ORVIETO, MARSCIANO, CAMPO DI MARTE and FICULLE.
Rail yards at CASTEL MAGGIORE.
The port of SPEZIA.
Shipping off the DALMATIAN coast.
GENOA and PIACENZE.

RUSSIA.

(38 enemy planes shot down).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.

(126 Jap planes shot down in 2 days).
The Jap Naval base at TRUK.
Jap installations in HANSA BAY (N. Guinea).
Targets at RABAUL.
A bridge at BOUGAINVILLE (Solomons).

BURMA.

Enemy installations at MANDALAY.
Communications in the MANDALAY, MONYWA and SAGAING areas.
Railway yards at MAYMYO and MANDALAY.
Enemy positions and rivercraft in the ARAKAN, MAYU and KALADAN areas.

3—5—44 Wednesday.
EUROPE (German occupied).

DAY:—
Military installations in the PAS DE CALAIS areas.
Military targets in North FRANCE and BELGIUM.

NIGHT:—(49 Allied planes missing).
Equipment and store dumps at MAILLY (France).
A dump at CHATEAUDUN (France).
Targets at LUDWIGSHAFEN (Germany).
Laying mines in enemy waters.
BUCHAREST (Capital of Rumania).
German troops in SEBASTOPOL area (Russia).

ITALY.

Communications and bridges in the battle areas.

RUSSIA.

(24 enemy planes shot down).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.

Jap installations at HANSA BAY (N. Guinea).
Bivouac areas at ULIGAN field.
Barges at HATZFELDT harbour.
Store targets at CAPE CROISIELLES.
Targets at RABAUL (N. Britain).
The runway on the DUKE of YORK Island.
Barges in KERAUIA BAY.

BURMA.

Enemy positions, rivercraft and railway targets in the ARAKAN, MAYU, KALADAN, CHIN Hills and CHINDWIN Valley areas.
Airfields at THEDAW and KANGAUN.

4—5—44. (Thursday).
EUROPE (German occupied).

DAY:—(9 enemy planes shot down; 3 Allied planes missing).
An airfield in HOLLAND.
Communications and bridges in FRANCE and BELGIUM.

NIGHT:—
Objectives in Western GERMANY.
Laying mines in enemy waters.
BUDAPEST (Capital of Hungary).
BUCHAREST (Capital of Rumania).
The oilfields at PLOESTI (Rumania).
Railway yards at TURNU.

ITALY.

(4 enemy planes shot down).
Bridges at GROSSETO, ALBINA and FABRIANO.
Rail communications in the TERNI-SULMONA area.
Enemy positions in the battle areas.

RUSSIA.

(74 enemy planes shot down).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.

The Jap base at PARAMUSHIRO (Kurile Islands).
Targets at NAURU and PONAPE Islands.
Remaining Jap bases in the MARSHALLS group.
The airfield on WAKE Island.
The airfield at WEWAK (N. Guinea).
Supply dumps at HANSA BAY (N. Guinea).
A Jap barge off HANOVER.
Buildings at RABAUL.

BURMA.

The railway yards at MANDALAY and MAYMYO.
Railway communications river transport and troop concentrations in the ARAKAN, KALADAN, MAYU, CHIN Hills and CHINDWIN Valley areas.

5—5—44 (Friday).
EUROPE (German occupied).

DAY:—
Rail centres at CAMBRAI and SOMAIN.
Military objectives in the PAS DE CALAIS area and Northern FRANCE.
German positions in PODGORCIA (Yugoslavia).

NIGHT:—
Railway yards at BRASOV, PLOESTI, CRAIOVA, CAMPINA and TURNU SEVERIN.
Laying mines in enemy waters.
Enemy shipping in the BLACK SEA.

ITALY.

Communications and gun positions in the battle areas.
Shipping off the DALMATIAN coast.

RUSSIA.

(62 enemy planes shot down).

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.

Airfields and supply areas at WEWAK (N. Guinea).

The airfield at MOKMER (SHOTEN Island).

A barge off MANAM Island.

Targets at CAPE LAVAI and LAGA.

Airfields and supply areas in RABAUL (N. Britain).

Gun positions, in the BUKA Passage area (Bougainville).

BURMA.

Enemy positions and supply dumps in the ARAKAN, KALADAN, MAYU, CHINDWIN areas and in North-West BURMA.

Supplies in PINBAW-HOPIN area.

Motor transport in KALEWA and TIDDIM areas.

Locomotives and rolling stock in the battle areas.

6—5—44 (Saturday).

EUROPE (German occupied).

DAY:—

Military installations in the PAS DE CALAIS area and North FRANCE.

NIGHT—

Laying mines in enemy waters.

ITALY.

Communications around the ROME area and in the battle areas.

Shipping off the DALMATIAN coast.

RUSSIA.

(41 enemy planes shot down).

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.

Airfields and other targets in the WEWAK and HANSA BAY areas (N. Guinea).

Targets at KAVIENG and BORPOP (N. Ireland).

Airfields and supply areas at RABAUL (N. Britain).

The airfield at KAHILI (Bougainville).

Barracks and fuel storage areas at KOEPANG (Timor).

PONAPE (Carolines).

Jap positions on the MARSHALLS.

BURMA.

Stores area near KALEMYO.

The Sibong bridge near TAMU.

Another bridge at HPAUNG-ZEIK.

Targets on the KAMAING LONKIN Road.

Gun positions, road and river transport in the ARAKAN, KALADAN and NAGA Hills areas and in N.W. BURMA.

Targets at NAMKWIN and NALONG.

Rivercraft, rolling stock and road transport in the battle areas.

ENEMY AIR RAIDS.

1—5—44 (Monday).

BRITAIN, RUSSIA and FAR EAST.

No enemy air activity.

2—5—44 (Tuesday).

BRITAIN.

No enemy air activity.

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.

No information.

3—5—44 (Wednesday).

BRITAIN.

Coastal targets in BRITAIN. (5 German aircraft shot down).

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.

No enemy air activity.

4—5—44 (Thursday).

BRITAIN, RUSSIA and FAR EAST.

No enemy air activity.

5—5—44. (Friday).

BRITAIN.

No enemy air activity.

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.

No information.

6—5—44. (Saturday).

BRITAIN and RUSSIA.

No enemy air activity.

FAR EAST.

BISHENPUR (India). (3 enemy planes destroyed)

7—5—44. (Sunday).

BRITAIN, RUSSIA and FAR EAST.

No information.

SIDE LIGHTS.

POISED TO STRIKE. With the advent of summer we see the Allied Armies poised to strike on Hitler's Festung Europa from east, west and south. Speaking for the Western Allies, Lord Halifax, British Ambassador in WASHINGTON, has said, 'We have in front of us the greatest military operation upon which perhaps any country in all history, was ever engaged'. Speaking on May Day, M. Stalin has declared the Soviet's resolve to beat the Axis beast in its lair. Rommel, who has now completed his inspection of the Mediterranean defences, has announced that the assault is 'imminent'. Dr. Goebbels, writing in the *Das Reich*, has told his countrymen that the Allies have now completed their preparations.

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FATEFUL SUMMERS. The summers of 1940 to 1943—the four war summers, have been fateful. The summer of 1940 saw the fall of FRANCE; the summer of 1941 saw Hitler advance to the gates of LENINGRAD and

MOSCOW; that of 1942, to the banks of the Volga and the foot-hills of the CAUCASUS. Hitler was then at the peak of his success. But STALINGRAD followed, and the summer of 1943 saw the beginning of Hitler's retreat, after a temporary stand at KURSK. The fifth summer is now upon him. Ejected from three-fourths of RUSSIA he is now menaced at his own frontier.

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HAS HITLER A PLAN? It is perhaps idle to ask this question. The hunted animal has no plan except to stand at bay, or run about to find a way of escape. Hitler's conferences with his Generals and Confiderates—especially with Mussolini whose influence, in politics or power to render military assistance, is negligible—may be only a show. But the question remains, why does Hitler hold on to ITALY, while abandoning RUSSIA. What is the meaning of his withdrawing large forces from nearer home in order to defend a narrow strip in distant ITALY. He seems to say, 'I shall fight the Western Powers now, rather than the Eastern.

Hitler, of course, is a magic man, whose ways are inscrutable. Goering has recently said of him, 'the Fuehrer does not choose to explain himself.' It would be presumptuous to follow in detail the processes of thought of this unique personality, since they are fed from irrational sources that lie beyond calculating reason.

To us, Hitler's present manoeuvre appears to be a bluff, an endeavour to create an impression of strength, while he is really weakening, to sow dissension, meanwhile, if he can, between the Allies, and to make his countrymen realise that a peril no less than the Russian is rising in the West and South of EUROPE.

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A RUSSIAN PARADOX. The war is full of paradoxes, and of these, one is the lull on the Russian front, which has now lasted for nearly a month. The Red Army which made marvellous advances in the bogs of the UKRAINE, in the depth of winter, has halted at the advent of summer. The explanation is in two words: Communications and Timing. Food may be picked up on the way by the advancing army, especially in its own territory, but reinforcements and military supplies must come from the rear. The Russians have to wait for the reorganisation of their road and rail systems in their rear. They have now advanced far from their original bases.

The other reason is the need to wait for the opening of the Second Front, so that the blows may fall simultaneously from two sides.

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THE COUNTER-ATTACK. The Germans, taking advantage of the temporary lull, and of the good communications they have behind them, have been counter-attacking fiercely in the LWOW region, but their attempts so far have been unavailing.

Meanwhile, the Russian air-arm and the Black Sea Fleet are carrying out incessant attacks on the enemy.

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THE ECONOMIC WAR. TURKEY's latest decision to stop all her chrome supplies to GERMANY must be taken as its part of the pre-invasion plans to cripple GERMANY. GERMANY was prepared for some reduction of this supply, but not for its entire stoppage. GREEK and YUGOSLAV supplies of chrome are also threatned by the Partisan movement. Nikopol manganese has gone. Finnish nickel may go at

any moment. SPAIN will send no more wolfram. All these minerals are essential for hardening steel.

This economic blow, hard by itself, will have its political reaction also. The Turkish decision is an indication of the fact that GERMANY is no longer a menace, and that the days of her bullying neutrals are over.

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THE BLUE LEGION. The announcement of the Spanish Foreign Office that the whole of the Blue Legion has been withdrawn from the Russian Front should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt, in view, especially, of the *Izvestia's* complaint that recruitment for the force is continuing. But if the Spanish version has any basis of truth, it is surely a triumph of Allied diplomacy, for which every credit must be given to the British Ambassador in MADRID, and of the recent declarations of Allied policy that breaches by neutrals will no longer be tolerated.

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AIR WAR. The Allied bombing of railway communications has been so heavy that they are now reported to be unfit to carry much war traffic. On May 4, the R. A. F. attacked the store dumps at MAILLY in FRANCE, which shows that the pre-invasion attack has taken another form, and is intended to destroy the enemy's stored up supplies.

BERLIN commentators are trying to prove that the German war industry has been transferred to safe places in the interior. But recent developments in bombing technique show that this is not so. The U. S. A. F's attack on POSEN, for instance, involved a journey of 1,600 air-miles. Targets in POLAND and East PRUSSIA are now within range of BRITAIN-based aircraft. The bombing of PLOESTI, BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST and SOFIA from FOGGIA in S. ITALY has demonstrated beyond doubt that the entire BALKANS, and a fair part of Southern GERMANY, have now come within striking distance of Allied bombers.

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THE WAR AT SEA. While the attention of the world is naturally focussed on the great developments which have taken place in the air war, the Allied Navies are striking hard blows in every part of the world. At the beginning of April, it may be remembered, British naval airmen attacked the *Tirpitz*, the last German battleship, in Alten Fjord. In the middle of April, British naval airmen dropped their bombs in far-away SABANG, the Japanese base in SUMATRA. During the whole of April, British warships have been guarding convoys and sowing naval mines.

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ON THE BURMESE FRONTIER. According to the latest news, the Japs are now taking a big beating in the KOHIMA area as well as in the IMPHAL sector, and the Chinese advance in the MOGAUNG valley is being kept up. Not long ago the Japanese declared, 'the Japanese army has now reached the stage of invincibility, and the day when the Rising Sun will proclaim a definite victory in INDIA, is not far off. By its very definite success it may even lead to the conclusion of the war'. How extravagant were the hopes and how false? The outstanding result of the Japanese campaign has been the lack of any success. On the ASSAM front it has ended in mere manoeuvring with advantage to the Allies. The DIMAPUR-KOHIMA road has been opened. KOHIMA itself has been relieved. To-day, the hopes of the enemy have been reduced to despair.

INDIA'S SMALL SHIPS are achieving ascendancy in Burmese waters. They are continually on the offensive, and the Japanese have made no attempt to bring them into action. These little ships have had the audacity to enter unchartered estuaries and attack enemy ships in anchorages.

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THE BAY OF BENGAL. Submarines of the Royal Navy operating in the Bay of Bengal have achieved signal success against Japanese shipping off the ANDAMANS and in other Far Eastern waters.

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INDIAN TROOPS, says the *Indian News Letter* of April 9, have a high capacity for acclimatising themselves to any country in the world. They felt at home when they fought in the marshy tropics and burning sands of N. AFRICA and the MIDDLE EAST. In ITALY, they have shown that they are equally at home in blizzard and snow storm. In the last six months of winter there were only two cases of death from exposure, and these occurred on New Year's Eve on the Adriatic coast because the victims were fool-hardy. On the CASSINO Front, where they have to sit in trenches for days, there were only a few cases of trench-foot. According to an Indian Army Medical Corps Colonel, Indian troops have had the lowest sickness rate among the United Nations. There have been very few cases of influenza and none of typhus. They do not suffer from shell-shock.

Another medical personage has commented on the unselfish behaviour of the wounded Indian soldier. 'He may be bleeding profusely,' he says, 'but he will insist on the doctor dressing the other fellow first.'

"SOMEONE HAD BLUNDERED" IN THE CRIMEA.

SWIFT COLLAPSE OF AXIS TROOPS.

(By Wickham Steed).

"Some one had blundered" ran a line in the famous poem written by Tennyson on the British cavalry charge in the Crimean war, fought some 90 years ago for reasons now forgotten.

The line aptly describes the German strategy in the present Crimean war, fought for reasons all free nations understand.

Few military events have been more spectacular than the swift collapse and the headlong flight of German and Rumanian troops in the Crimea. Powerless to stem the Russian onrush they sped panic-stricken to Sevastopol, vainly hoping to escape by sea. The question why they were left in the Crimean peninsula until every chance of evacuation had vanished admits of only one answer: "Someone had blundered."

Manstein, who conquered the Crimea two years ago, may have been unwilling to withdraw. Or the German High Command may have ordered him to hold on until the German counter-offensive should reopen the Perekop Isthmus, which the Russians had blocked.

The German High Command has revealed special genius for leaving German armies to be surrounded by Russian forces, either to face annihilation or escape with devastating loss.

Beginning at Stalingrad, these mad tactics have been employed five times. Only once-round Skala—has a remnant of entrapped Germans been rescued.

An uneasy feeling that something is gravely amiss now haunts German minds. They know that Hitler's Russian conquests are lost; that Rumania trembles between defeat and capitulation; that Bulgaria and Hungary are learning the power of Allied aircraft and the weakness of the *Luftwaffe*; and that hardly a centre of German war industry remains intact. Millions of foreign workmen enslaved in Germany yet eagerly awaiting deliverance increase the German despondency and confusion.

As a solace, Hitler offers them the assurance that the invasion of Western Europe from Britain will end "in a new and larger Dunkirk".

Nobody in Britain doubts that the German resistance to the invasion will be fierce and intense. No British soldier, statesman or journal has promised swift or easy victory. Nothing comparable to Hitler's earlier assurances that the Russian army had been struck down and smashed beyond recovery has been given—or needed—to sustain the British confidence in ultimate success.

But if German armies fail to fulfil Hitler's present assurance that the Allied armies in Western Europe will endure a new and larger Dunkirk, the German faith in their military leaders would suffer total eclipse as an outcome of their total war.

ALLIED GOVERNMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS ON DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES.

In London, as abroad, the Government's decision to restrict diplomatic privileges has been taken as a certain sign that the invasion of Europe is fast approaching. Britain's public realises that the step would not have been taken if reasons in its favour had not been overwhelming, since this action is without precedent, but so is the present state of Europe.

It is believed that neutrals and Allies, aware of the necessity of keeping Britain as isolated as possible during the later stages of the invasion preparations, have understood the Government's decision.

Allied Governments in London are personally affected. The Czech Foreign Minister, Mr. Masaryk, now in America, may not be able to return; his Minister, due to leave for Russia to be present at the liberation of the Czech territory, may not be able to leave; the Royal Yugoslav Government will not return to Cairo, and Mr. Andre Philip, Minister of State in the French Committee of Liberation, will not leave for Algiers.

Russia, America and the Dominions with the exception of Eire are not included in the ban.

Mr. Stettinius, after finishing his diplomatic mission in London, will be able to return to Washington. During the last few days, he has turned his attention to economic questions, and discussed with Britain's Minister of Production and Minister of Food lease-lend arrangements now under review, and special attention has been given to the European food-supply after the war.

At the same time, the European Advisory Council has discussed proposals submitted by Dr. Benes (President of Czechoslovakia) and the Governments of Belgium, Holland, Norway and the French Committee, on the basic principles for the restoration of civil

administration in those liberated countries whose Governments are unlikely to be the subject of internal and external friction. The basic idea is that advancing Allied military forces should hand over the civil administration to local authorities, representing the population of freed areas and principal democratic parties in the country. Then the Governments in exile would be gradually transferred to the homeland, the first Minister to return presumably being the Ministry of Social Welfare, working in close collaboration with the U. N. R. R. A. and followed by Ministries of Home Affairs and Justice.

AIR SEA RESCUE: THE R. A. F. HAS ITS OWN "NAVY" TOO.

It is not generally known that the R. A. F., in addition to its thousands of planes operating over lands in all parts of the world, has also its own 'navy' in the form of numerous high-speed launches, several of which are now operating from bases in India and Ceylon. These R. A. F., boats, manned by R. A. F., crews, have been instrumental in saving the lives of hundreds of pilots and other members of air crews forced to land in the 'drink,' as the sea is called in modern Air Force parlance.

The rise of the launches for rescue work was, of course, a pre-war measure, and many will recall how aircraftman Shaw (as Lawrence of Arabia preferred to be known in the years preceding his all-too-early death—years which he stated to be the happiest of his strangely brilliant career) worked hard towards the improvement of these craft. It was in 1929 that he agitated with Air Ministry for a faster type of R. A. F., all-weather speed-boat to act as tender to flying boats, and as the result of this he was put to work on the production of marine craft.

Unfortunately, Lawrence never lived to see the result of his labours, but a close friend of his, who collaborated with him in designing and experimenting with these launches, is now a Flight Lieutenant in the Air Sea Rescue Service in Ceylon.

As soon as war broke out, the launches, the majority of which belonged to Coastal Command, were earmarked for rescue purposes, and during the opening months of the war many lives were saved by the timely use of these boats.

May, 1940, saw the extension of the range of British bombers, and when the Battle of Britain, with which the summer of that momentous year was brought to a close, was developing, it became obvious that a speedy extension of rescue facilities was necessary, and so successfully has it been developed in Great Britain that over 1,300 rescues have been effected by crews serving there.

As the war spread east to Egypt and to Burma and the Far East, so did the Air Sea Rescue Service extend its range, and soon the high speed launches were operating in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, as well as the waters nearer home.

Although actual constructional details of the launches must, for the time being at any rate, remain a closely guarded secret, it might be mentioned that they are capable of exceptionally fast travelling. At one time their decks were painted yellow—the colour which is most easily seen at sea—but they presented too easy a target for a foe willing to defy all rules of humanity and to-day battleship-grey is the colour employed. They plough through the often mountainous seas at a breath-taking speed; for, split seconds are of the

utmost value in sea rescue work, and a very-light or a weak wireless signal means 'flat-out' to those who man the launches. The R. A. F., Navy has certainly earned its proud motto: "WE Bring 'Em Back Alive."

Naturally, the task of putting the rescue services into operation is intricate, but very thorough. As soon as an S. O. S. message is received, steps are taken to check the exact position of the aircraft in distress, and a search aircraft is sent out. At the same time, the launches are got ready for action. The search aircraft has to locate the dinghy—no easy matter when one remembers the smallness of the craft compared with the vastness of the ocean—and, this done, a signal is sent to base. Sometimes the stranded airman has been unable to open the dinghy and is held afloat by the "Mae West" alone. In that case a dinghy can be dropped from the search plane. Food can also be dropped. Until the rescue launch arrives a constant patrol is maintained by aircraft.

Sometimes men have been rescued within a few minutes of their aircraft being 'ditched,' but in others the rescue is only effected after the survivors have been subjected to a long spell of drifting about in the dinghy. Every effort is made to deal with exhausted or wounded men. Each boat carries four stretchers in the ambulance cabin, or sick bay, but eight more can be fitted in the crew's quarters, and two more in each of the master's and cox's cabins if required.

PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

Launches of the R. A. F., Air Sea Rescue Service are now operating in the Bay of Bengal and off the Arakan Coast, and although the number of craft employed is but small, already it has proved its value in rescuing airmen who have made forced landings in the sea. As the air offensive against the Japs grows in intensity, so will the rescue service increase; and at the present time plans for further development are being put into operation.

Adventure is all part of the day's routine in air sea rescue work. "There's no such thing as a routine day," said the skipper of one of the launches. "Currents here are strange, and what is quite a good course one day may be rendered impossible by sand-banks the next. Navigation becomes a tricky business in these waters."

Quite a large proportion of the trips of the launches are in uncharted waters, and at the moment extensive survey work in the Bay of Bengal is part of the programme being carried out. Charts soon become out of date. One recently studied showed the presence of a large island near the mouth of the Ganges. "That disappeared after the last monsoon season," one of the skippers remarked: "and three new ones appeared in the vicinity. That's an example of the type of thing we are always being confronted with."

The launches often journey to places off hostile shores, and one of the most exciting trips was to Foul Island, some distance south of Akyab, which another skipper and his crew undertook some little time back. At a critical moment both engines failed and the launch drifted close to the shores. Just when visions of being taken prisoner were uppermost in the minds of the crew, one engine was coaxed into action again and the launch succeeded in effecting a get-away.

On another occasion a Jap 'recce' plane was shot down near the mouth of a river, and the Air Sea Rescue folk were sent to search for the pilot. Unfortunately, they were not told the nature of their quest, and on arriving at the place where the 'plane had crashed nto the sea they cruised round a while before making a gruesome find—a pair of legs still

encased in flying boots. Spirits sank to zero. For once it seemed that their motto had not been obeyed. They searched round and then found pieces of wreckage with Japanese markings plainly visible. Spirits rose quickly. The motto of "Bring 'Em Back Alive" could scarcely be held to apply to the enemy!

On arrival at base a message was waiting from an Intelligence Officer near asking for any 'trophies' to be sent for investigation. What that officer said when he undid a neat paper parcel and found a pair of boots still containing the legs of their unfortunate owner cannot be disclosed!

IN CEYLON AND SOUTH INDIA.

In Ceylon and South India, Air Sea Rescue Units have taken part in some exciting rescues off the coasts of the island, and sometimes their journeys have taken them far out into the Indian Ocean. On one occasion a Catalina made a forced landing some five hundred miles south of Colombo, and one of the launches made a twenty hours trip in search of survivors. At length it returned to base with petrol for only a further twenty minutes remaining in her tanks.

What is certainly a new innovation so far as high speed launches is concerned is their use in Ceylon for rescuing the occupants of planes which have crashed in the jungle! Often enough it is quicker to go by launch to the nearest point than to attempt to cut a way through the forests and wastes.

Not so long ago a bomber crashed in one of the island's jungles, and after the crew had been brought away safely it was decided that a guard should be mounted over the plane. The Air Sea Rescue people were given the job of taking these guards, and a whole squadron of the R. A. F. regiment was transported in this way.

Unfortunately, a rough sea was running and the regiment lads were not very good sailors. A solitary dinghy was the only landing craft. Each man had to be loaned a "Mae West" as a precautionary measure, while to get the rifles and ammunition ashore without mishap was no easy task.

The boats usually carry a complement of eleven, and one can say with conviction that they are a really happy family. "After all, why shouldn't we be cheerful?" asked a member of the crew of one of the boats. We've got a fine healthy job, plenty of adventure and thrills—and there's not so much danger of being bitten by mosquitoes at sea.

WHAT I HAVE DONE IN ITALY.

(*By Marshal Badoglio, Head of the Government*).

Let us make a rapid review of Italian events from July 25, 1943, until now. On July 25, following His Majesty's order to Mussolini to resign consequent upon the vote of the Fascist Grand Council, I assumed power.

During the month and a half during which it functioned in Rome, the Government presided over by me took the following measures:

(1) The dissolution of the Fascist Party, Grand Council, the Fascist Chamber and corporations.

(2) Promulgation of the law regarding illicitly-acquired fortunes.

(3) The removal of 50 Fascist prefects and their replacement by professionals.

(4) Elimination of Fascists from the principal posts in State and semi-State concerns.

(5) Arrest of the principal and most dangerous Fascist Party leaders.

(6) Absorption of the Fascist militia into the Army.

SOUGHT CONTACT.

These measures, which were fiercely resisted by the Germans, immediately occasioned the descent into Italy of numerous German divisions. Against this disposition we had no means to make resistance, because Mussolini, as Commander-in-Chief of all our armed forces, had disseminated our divisions outside Italy.

Fully 36 divisions were outside our territory ; therefore only 12 shrunken, ill-armed divisions garrisoned the continent.

It being impossible, owing to the lack of supplies and the decided unwillingness of our people, to continue the war, we sought by means of emissaries to make contact with the British and Americans for the conclusion of an armistice.

BLAME "CHILDISH".

We are blamed for having delayed too long the conclusion of an armistice, but this is childish, for it is evident that in order to reach a conclusion it was necessary that the other party also should consent, whereas up to September 3 we never had the approval of the Allied Supreme Command. Simple declaration of an armistice or unilateral surrender would have placed us at the mercy of the Germans, without any hope of help from the Anglo-Americans.

Our command had concentrated at least six divisions to defend Rome. But after the proclamation of the armistice on the evening of September 8 German divisions garrisoned in the neighbourhood of the city suddenly moved against Rome.

For reasons which in due course will be ascertained, after a few episodes of strenuous resistance, our defences totally collapsed.

It was impossible to remain in Rome without falling into the hands of the Germans.

STRIKE PLANNED.

Therefore, the Royal family, I myself, and such Ministers as I could warn made for Brindisi, passing via Tivoli and Pescara.

During the six weeks of my authority in Rome, all the authentic heads of the political parties accorded full support to my Government.

The proof is this. Through German agents' machinations, preparations were made for a general strike on September 1. On August 31, there appeared in the newspapers a declaration by all authentic party leaders summoning the workers to abstain from any strike or action directed against the Government.

Shortly afterwards at Brindisi I received a telegram from America from Count Sforza, in which he stated he considered criminal any opposition to my Government so long as I enjoyed the trust of the Allies, and that all our internal questions should be resolved after the conclusion of the war.

MEN OF GOODWILL.

Delighted by this communication, I proceeded along the path already traced, and arranged the declaration of war against Germany, obtaining from the Allies co-belligerency.

It is unnecessary to repeat, because everybody knows it, in what manner Sforza's declaration was implemented.

Having reconstructed the Government with men of absolute goodwill, who, like myself, considered what was necessary to make the maximum contribution to the war and initiate the reconstruction of the country, we set to work observing the following principles :—

(1) Resolutely to dismount the complex and intricate Fascist structure which for 22 years had, like an octopus, permeated the whole structure and activities of the State, and simultaneously remove from all posts, control and responsibility all those who had been leaders of the Fascist Party. This principle had been provided for by the decree regarding de-Fascistisation, and the creation of a commissonership for the purging, of which Tito Zaniboni was nominated.

(2) To collaborate with the best will and the most complete loyalty with the United Nations in order to win the war. The activity of the Government and our armed forces in this sense has been fully recognised by the Allied Governments. This is shown by the transference of the administration of the provinces to the Government, and by the speech in the House of Commons by Churchill.

(3) To improve as far as possible, considering our financial exhaustion, the situation of wage and salary-earners. This has been implemented by decrees on employees, salaries, industrial and agricultural workers' wages and increase of subsidies to pensioners and clergy.

(4) To organise territory for the quicker and more equitable distribution of food-stuffs. Difficulties in the way are many, seeing the poverty of our means of communication, but we hope to be able sensibly to improve the situation. Truly notable aid in this field has been generously given by the Allies, and I desire once more to express my warm gratitude.

(5) To restore our industries, road communications, railways, telegraphs and telephones. Despite the enormous damage inflicted, and the scantiness of the means at our disposal, we have gone forward on the path of reconstruction.

(6 Leave liberty of action to the Press within the strict limits of the exigencies of war. Although this liberty, of which we had lost the habit, may have produced disorder in every direction, I am convinced good order will prevail, and that we shall reach a level of calm, dignified, solidly argued discussion of our most urgent problems.

(7) To put off until the end of the war, that is, until the whole Italian people can freely manifest their own will, all discussions and provisions regarding our future State organisation.

FRIENDLY STATES.

So much for our internal problem. As to our external contacts, it has been my care to resume friendly relations with States from which no dispute had ever divided us, and renew with those against whom we had become ranged in this disastrous war relations of cordiality and mutual comprehension.

The results of this strenuous work will later be made known.

Criticisms of all sorts may be levelled against us. Only those who act make mistakes. But nobody can cast doubt on our immense love for this tormented Italy, or our unshakeable determination to make every effort which may help to raise her again.

HUMBERT : PRINCE OF PIEDMONT.

The Times (By the special correspondent in Naples).

Now that King Victor Emmanuel has taken the decision to retire into private life as soon as the Allies reach Rome, delegating the Royal powers to his son, and the opposition parties have accepted this as a basis of collaboration with Marshal Badoglio, the personality of Humbert, Prince of Piedmont, who will be called upon to represent the Crown, with the title of Lieutenant of the Realm, becomes a matter of international interest.

Circumstances have compelled this Prince to remain a lay figure for 20 years of his adult life. His coming of age coincided roughly with the triumph of Fascism. Mussolini, having quickly established the tradition that he and none other did the thinking for the Italian people, had no use for the King, still less for his son.

Humbert was discouraged from appearing in public, except in the innocuous rôle of the ski-runner. No opportunity was given him to become familiar with State affairs or gain an insight into the art of Government. He was accorded the rank of General, but was given what was essentially an office job. He was known to detest Fascists, but by a decree which made his succession to the throne dependent on the goodwill of the Grand Fascist Council, he became virtually their prisoner, bound to follow their cue if he wanted to remain heir.

Thanks to the fall of Fascism, and some astute political manoeuvring on the part of his father, the Prince has again come into his birthright. He is now in his 40th year, a man on whose actions much may depend, for though with the current of democratic ideas flowing along in Italy a Lieutenant-General may remain merely a figurehead so long as there is a Government functioning, he will be bound to be more than that whenever a Government resigns. When he comes to Naples, the Prince resides in his villa overlooking the bay, where Nelson first met Lady Hamilton, and it was there that he received *The Times* correspondent.

He speaks English easily with engaging charm of manner. "Did you ever come into sharp conflict with Mussolini?" I asked. The Prince made a deprecatory gesture. "That man was very clever in exploiting the feelings of the people," he said. "He knew just how to play on them and gather credit for everything which went well, and at first he had the full support of the nation. He knew his power and used it very subtly."

I asked if I might put a highly delicate question. The Prince smiled encouragingly. "In English we often ask ourselves if the King couldn't have prevented Italy from declaring war against Britain and France," I said. The Prince shook his head. "Impossible," he replied. "Had he attempted to resist Mussolini, it would have brought the Germans down on us. What happened last September would have happened then, and you must remember that at that time Germany was not at war with Russia, but had its army intact. The linking up of Fascism with Nazism made the other course out of question. Moreover, there was no sign that the nation wanted it otherwise. Not a single voice was raised in protest. No demand was made for summoning the Italian Parliament, ostensibly, Mussolini had the country with him."

We then discussed the institution of Lieutenant-Generalcy, and the Prince revealed a close knowledge of the Italian History. He spoke of the revival of political life, and expressed the opinion that the Allies seemed to expect the Italian people to run before they could walk.

"I feel it is rather the people who say just what they like after such a long break. That has led to a lot of wild talk and to all these insults to the King. I think it would have been better to have stuck to the Allied military Government, or to have established an Italian Government in rather a direct form. Surely it is not in the interests of the Allies that the Italian people should be in a state...." Here the Prince made a gesture of hand which was intended to indicate turbulence or excitement.

We pronounced in favour of a small well-found force, rather than a large army with indifferent equipment. "But all that depends on the Allies." The Prince remarked that there were among the prisoners of war plenty of well-trained Italian soldiers in Allied hands, who would help to clear the Germans out of their country.

"There are lots of Carabinieri in your prisoner-of-war camps whom we badly need to keep order and help suppress the black-market."

One was left with the impression of a man who had been brought up with strict regard for constitutional forms, but who, nevertheless, recognised the advantages of a strong administrative control. He would have respected every expression of his people's will, conveyed by means of parliament and elections, but would look to the Carabinieri to prevent politics from erupting in streets and public places.

The Prince concluded with a word of warm appreciation of Marshal Badoglio, who in spite of great anxiety for members of his family on the other side of the line was doing an unfamiliar job with great loyalty and geniality.

BADOGLIO'S NEW CABINET.

(*By C. M. Franzero, the former London Correspondent of the **Giornale d' Italia**, in the **Daily Telegraph**.*)

From the Italian viewpoint, the new Badoglio Government, the formation of which has proved a more laborious task than had seemed probable at first, suggests a combination of realism and Italian temperament. The first thing that strikes the Italians is that it is composed of men vastly different in political stature and experience.

For many reasons, this is purely a provisional Government. One reason is a very cogent one, that no Government can be considered really representative of Italy without the men of the all-important north. The presence of Benedetto Croce gives the new Government the imprint of liberalism which is in Italy an equivalent of democracy.

There is no need to sketch any biography of this well-known philosopher. From the political angle, however, it may be said that his participation in active politics has been rather forced on him by his friends and circumstances, for during nearly all his life, he has remained, if not aloof, certainly above political strife. Only once in 1920 did he agree to undertake an active part in political affairs, and that was when he became Minister for Education under Giolitti, in the unsettled period after the end of the last war.

After Sforza's arrival in Naples, Croce's name was associated with the anti-King cry. Croce, however, always remained a believer in monarchy as an institution which still acts very strongly as a rallying point in the unity of Italy. Sforza's career, apart from the brief period as Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to Paris in the years before Mussolini's advent to power, is mostly one of scholarly exile, into which he went of his own accord in 1926.

Since his return to Italy last October, Sforza has possibly fallen somewhat short of expectations. Perhaps some people had set too much store upon the political assets of leadership, and the value of a man so long outside his own country. Sforza is no doubt a man of cultural attainments, but his political reputation has been more created by his foreign friends than founded upon the opinion of his countrymen in Italy. This may explain the tactical error he committed after his arrival in Italy—an error which caused many months of needless trouble, and the impasse was solved only by the intervention of a Communist from Russia, Palmiro Togliatti.

Other members of the new Cabinet are rather unknown men in the field of politics, and as yet untried in the art of Government. One of them is Togliatti. Emigrating to Russia some 23 years ago, he was thoroughly schooled in Communist methods and there became a member of what used to be the Comintern. Now he has returned home; it may fall to him to give a lesson in realism to the new leaders of liberated Italy.

It is not surprising that Marshal Badoglio has reserved the Foreign Office for himself. This means that King Victor will continue to guide from behind the scene the relations of struggling Italy with the Allies and other nations. The portfolios of war and marine remain in the hands of Marshal Badoglio and Admiral de Courten respectively. This should help to assure that continuity of military collaboration which is the main Allied aim.

ACHIEVING UNITY AMONG GREEK PARTIES.

(From the Times).

The political situation in Greece shows signs of improvement, which justify hopes of a satisfactory end of a tangle which has caused so much trouble and concern during the last few months.

The resignation of M. Tsouderos, and the constitution of a new Government under M. Sophocles Venizelos, with the desire of including in it representatives of all shades of political opinion and of Partisan organisations, is one step towards allaying political and social unrest. Occupation by a foreign Power has shaken the old political structure, and has caused sharp contests between three elements.

First, there were the Greek Government and officials residing abroad, who have been accused by those in Greece of having lost contact with the real conditions in that country. Nevertheless, they have been able to keep in touch with other United Nations, and thereby to render great services to the Greek cause. Secondly, there were politicians of the old school who remained in Greece, and have been accused by Partisan organisations of being out of touch with new political conditions, although they possess political experience and most of them still command obedience of the people in various parts of Greece. Thirdly, there are Partisan organisations, which are doing a really hard work for national liberation, and are claiming to be the only reperesentatives of national aspirations of the Greek peeple.

THREE PARTISAN GROUPS.

There are three principal Partisan groups, EAM (National Liberation Front) with its military organisation; ELAS (Greek Popular Liberation Army) which has the greatest number of adherents, and EDES (Greek Democratic Liberation Army) under the leadership of Colonel Zervas and Ekka, a military and non-political body, led by Colonel Psaros.

The EAM formed recently a special committee of five, named PEET (Greek initials for "Political Committee of National Liberation") popularly called the "Committee of

Mountains", whose chairman is Colonel Bakirjis, a former member of the Left Wing Venizolist Party, who had been a political exile for many years.

Of the five members, only one is a Communist. Since M. Tsouderos' resignation and the formation of a new Government, it is understood that PEET has agreed to co-operate with other political parties, and even to take part in the new Government.

From information received here, it appears that representatives of various Partisan groups are on their way to Cairo to consult with the King and M. Venizelos, and it is possible that some of the Ministerial portfolios now retained by M. Venizelos may be assigned to them.

All friends of Greece will rejoice if the political tangle is settled, and union of all Greeks is attained for the final struggle against the invaders.

The chief problem is how to reconcile old political habits and traditions with new conditions and currents; a little moderation and common sense should certainly bridge the differences, which in view of the social conditions in Greece, are neither too acute nor too deep-rooted.

"FOLLY IN HELSINKI".

THE TIMES" ON FINLAND'S REJECTION OF RUSSIAN ARMISTICE TERMS.

The Finnish Government have rejected the revised Russian conditions for an armistice and for their withdrawal from the war. There will be genuine and widespread regret that the Finish Government have not seized a golden opportunity, offered them not only to end the sufferings of their people, but also to ensure national independence on a secure and honourable basis.

It is deplorable that at this stage of the war any Government should have acted with the levity of the Finnish leaders. There is more than a suspicion of bad faith in their handling of the discussions. The present Government in Helsinki includes members–such as Tanner—who were most closely responsible for the fateful decision in June, 1942, to enter war at Germany's side and behest. That the Russians agreed to treat with them, instead of justifiably insisting on their disappearance from office, was an open proof that Moscow wishes to make the way out as easy as possible.

RESTRAINED THOUGH REALISTIC.

A full account of the course and conclusion of the discussions which M. Vishinsky, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, gave in Moscow at the week-end emphasizes the patience, moderation and understanding of the Finnish people's difficulties which the Russians have shown throughout. At each crucial stage they have consulted the British Government and have accepted their views on certain points, and the American Government have been equally associated in all exchanges, and almost everywhere except in Helsinki the terms have been recognised as restrained though realistic. They required certain territorial readjustments mainly on the lines of the 1940 treaty, reparation in kind for the severe losses which Russia has suffered, and internment or expulsion of German troops. Other terms provided for the progressive demobilisation of the Finnish armed forces to a peace footing.

On their side, the Russians were willing to renounce their rights in Hangoe. At no time was there any question of Russian military occupation of the country. In their final reply, the Finnish Government said that the proposals could not in part be carried out "for purely technical reasons", and that they would jeopardize Finland's national independence, and would impose a burden beyond her means. The reply showed clearly

that the Finnish Government were determined at whatever risk to their people to persist in their disastrous folly.

The conclusion is irresistible. Finland's present rulers are still willing to play the German game, rather than seek their own people's interest. War-weariness of the people is manifest, and the longing for peace is deep and widespread. It was awareness of this that forced the Government to make overtures for peace in February, but evidence accumulates that they were more anxious to find excuses for frustrating their own initiative than to fashion the means for bringing it to a beneficent fulfilment.

NAZI PRESSURE ON FINLAND.

The German pressure on Helsinki has been intensified—additional German troops, have been sent to Finnish ports and railway centres—and German counsel has been heeded Fascist elements in the country have made ready for action. The war party has in fact had its triumph in rejecting Moscow's terms. The cost will be paid by others, for argument must soon give place to action—and that of a most drastic and painful kind. Field Marshal Mannerheim who, it was once thought, would come forward at the 12th hour as a counsellor of peace, has instead issued a proclamation summoning the nation to new sacrifices and sterner discipline. The prospect is worse than that. By persisting in their course the Finns stand to lose all. Under their present Government they face a hopeless future. Even now, however, other men may yet retrieve what is so wantonly being destroyed.

GENERAL LENTAIGNE SUCCEEDS WINGATE.

(From the Times).

The announcement of General Lentaigne's appointment shows that the loss of General Wingate, grievous though it was, has not been allowed to modify the general plan which he largely inspired, to link up with the forces advancing from the north under General Stilwell in his capacity as Deputy Supreme Commander to Admiral Mountbatten.

It is evident from our limited information that Chindit columns have done extensive damage astride the enemy's main lines of communication, though airborne units may have been landed too far in the rear to have immediate effect on the Japanese advanced bases at Myitkyina and Mogaung. This no doubt was a matter of selecting suitable landing ground in a hilly and thickly wooded country.

It is becoming more and more a race with the rains, but when the time comes to assess the season's operations, it may well be found that Allied achievements far surpass the Japanese thrusts against Imphal and Kohima which seem to have been contained, and must ultimately break against a superior weight of armament. In the campaign of attrition imposed on the High Command by lack of amphibious equipment, the Japanese in Burma have certainly suffered losses far in excess of our own.

General Lentaigne, the new leader of the Chindits, was serving in the present operations as one of Wingate's commanders, who were men of his own heart and would have a deep insight into his plans. He is an Indian Army officer from the Fourth Gurkha Rifles, and has the advantage of having fought through the Burma campaign, in which he was awarded the D. S. O.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SUMATRA RAID.

(From the Times).

Admiral Somerville's successful surprise to the hostile base of Sabang on the island of Pulo Weh, off the northern extremity of Sumatra, marks the opening of a new chapter in the Far Eastern war.

Until now, the American Navy has borne almost the entire burden of the Allied naval offensive against the Japanese sea power. With this successful and well-planned attack, the British Eastern Fleet, now built up to a formidable strength, enters the scene, and the Indian Ocean becomes the theatre of major conflicts. Delivery of this blow, only four days after Admiral Mountbatten had transferred the Headquarters of the South East Asia Command to Ceylon, appears to have taken the Japanese by surprise.

The bombardment of the enemy's base must have been damaging; four of his ships, which he can ill spare, were left ablaze; 22 of his aircraft were wrecked here or at the neighbouring airfield at Lhonga on the main island of Sumatra. Against this, our losses amounted to a single aeroplane, the pilot of which was saved by a bold manoeuvre on the part of one of our submarines.

ENEMY'S WITHDRAWAL.

The absence of any major Japanese warships from this important position, which is the one key entrance of the Straits of Malacca, is significant. It bears out the belief that our enemy has decided to withdraw his more important units from his exposed outposts, and that he will leave them to be defended by their garrisons and by such aircraft and submarines as he has.

Even more significant is the choice of Sabang as the first target of this new offensive. It lies on the shortest road to Singapore, and no Allied amphibious offensive, whether aimed at Malaya or Andamans or the rich and strategically important island of Sumatra itself, could afford to bypass it without grave risk. Its bombardment justifies the inference that the period of defensive strategy and tactics in the Indian Ocean is over at last; that although the approach of the monsoon rains may call a halt to major operations in the Indo-Burmese borderlands, other campaigns may be inaugurated before long in other theatres in the "South Seas".

There are many possible objectives for allied attacks in the long outpost line of island defences, some of which are known to be weakly held, and all of which cannot be held in strength. It is to say the least improbable that this bold and successful attack is only a "runaway knock".

SIAM'S CRY OF WOE.

With many millions subsisting on the verge of starvation in neighbouring lands such as Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, Siam now finds that she cannot dispose of her rice surplus, estimated at one million tons. In spite of the frantic efforts to build wooden ships to make up for the immense destruction of Japanese sea-going shipping, there are none to transport the rice even the short distances to Java and Singapore. The effects of this crisis were immediately felt in the heavy fall in value of the Siamese currency.

A Bangkok broadcast on April 6th referred to public weariness and defeatism, and said that "everyone is naturally dissatisfied with the very poor amount of goods" that could be purchased with Siamese money, and with the "enormous extent" of the rise in prices of all commodities. The currency had depreciated so much that "it is no longer possible for it to breathe." The people were warned of the danger that prices might rise "till there is no ceiling and the notes become just pieces of paper, which will mean the bankruptcy of the country."

There was a threat that the Government might stop using the old notes and print new ones. It was admitted that no imports were coming in from Japan or anywhere else, and that "one of the main troubles of the Government is that there is too much

rice, and the Government is unable to arrange for its sale." It was added that, in spite of the surplus of a million tons, the price of rice continued to rise, indicating that the Government is fast losing control since it adopted the policy of dispersal into the provinces.

Perhaps it was partly because of this crisis that the Government at last named Petchabun as the new capital—a matter on which close secrecy had been maintained, since it was announced that the Government was no longer in Bangkok and that Siam had no capital.

Meanwhile, the Government, through the Bangkok radio, continued its incessant admonitions to the people to maintain discipline, resolution, endurance, intelligence, etc., urged the need of strong children so that Siam might have strong soldiers, and denounced merchants selling goods at high prices. Reference was also made to heavy unseasonable rains in Siam. It was also admitted that since the Pacific War started there was such opposition to the régime that its enemies had increased greatly and "are found everywhere". They were accused of being "enemy agents."

SPITFIRE MARK XII.

FIGHTER FOR LOW ALTITUDES.

(By the Air Correspondent of the Daily Mail).

Far-reaching plans for the future of British aircraft, both in war and peace, are being based on the mighty Rolls-Royce Griffon engine, shown in action to-day for the first time.

The aeroplane, it is stated, belongs to the famous old family of Spitfires. It is the Spitfire Mark XII.

Britain now has flying at this very moment fighters with proved speed of more than 450 miles per hour in level flight. These are certain to be "top-cover" and general-purpose combat fighters, including one of a new name reported to be the "Tempest."

Spitfire XII is a specialised fighter designed for sensational performance at low altitudes. It reveals several new trends. It is the first operational Spitfire to be shown with a retractable tail-wheel. This adds to the cleanness of its design, and gives it greater speed. It has a large four-bladed Rotol propeller to make use of the great power of its Griffon engine. The fuselage has been strengthened, and as was done with one earlier mark of Spitfire, its wings have been clipped off at the tips to increase its speed and manoeuvrability.

I understand that the new fighter can rise from the ground to its operational height in an amazingly short space of time. This would vastly enhance its value as a bomber-intercepter or for army co-operation work.

It would cause no surprise if American makers of the ace Mustang fighter now sought Griffon for the same outstanding use as that to which they have put its predecessor, the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine.

The Transport Command of the R. A. F. which now ranks as a major operational command is flying 3,000,000 miles monthly—mostly with American aircraft. Half of this tremendous mileage is covered on the regular passenger and freight services, and the rest in ferrying aircraft across the Atlantic and elsewhere. The routes for regular services radiating from Britain extend for 20,000 miles. Most of the transports used are the four-engined Liberators and twin-motor Dakotas.

"CUCKOO, CUCKOO" SIGNAL INTERRUPTS HITLER'S BIRTHDAY BROADCAST.

(Daily Telegraph).

Radio Luxemburg, inadvertently collaborating with Allied aircraft, provided listeners with a delightful joke at the expense of Hitler on his 55th birthday.

During relay from Germany of a special birthday programme, and at the very moment when the *Luftwaffe* spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Graf, was describing in exalted terms his meeting with the Fuehrer, the station had to interrupt the transmission to announce the appearance of Allied aircraft.

Whether by mistake or intentionally, the operator began to play the interval signal of "Cuckoo, Cuckoo" into the still running broadcast.

The following impromptu followed: Col. Graf: Those who have had the great fortune to speak personally with the greatest leader of German history......(interval signal: Cuckoo, Cuckoo). Col. Graf: know him............(signal: Cuckoo, Cuckoo).

Here the broadcast was turned off, and a breathless announcer came to the microphone and said: "Owing to the approach of enemy aircraft, we are now closing down."

Members of the public are requested to make a free present of any suitable old Tamil books they can spare for the perusal, in their leisure time, of our soldiers outside India.

Books so given will be handed over to the Superintendent of the State Press, who will arrange to despatch them.

PUDUKKOTTAI STATE NATIONAL WAR FRONT BUREAU.

PROGRAMME.

LECTURE CXCVII. *(Batch 1).*

13- 5-44	Municipal Office	... 6.00 p.m.	17- 5-44	Pungudi	... 7.00 p.m.
14- 5-44	Kiranur	... 7.00 "	"	Satyamangalam	... 7.30 "
"	Nanjur	... 7.30 "	18- 5-44	Mirattunilai	... 7.00 "
15- 5-44	Puvarasakudi	... 7.00 "	"	Arimalam	... 7.30 "
"	Venkatakulam	... 7.30 "	19- 5-44	Udayalippatti	... 7.00 "
16- 5-44	Perungalur	... 7.00 "	"	Killukottai	... 7.30 "
"	Adanakkottai	... 7.30 "			

LECTURE CXCVIII. *(Batch 2).*

20- 5-44	Municipal Office	... 6.00 p.m.	24- 5-44	Kulipirai	... 7.00 p.m.
21- 5-44	Kudumiyamalai	... 7.00 "	"	Sevalur	... 7.30 "
"	Parambur	... 7.30 "	25- 5-44	Kalamavur	... 7.00 "
22- 5-44	Vengalur	... 7.00 "	"	Nallur	... 7.30 "
"	Konapattu	... 7.30 "	26- 5-44	Panayappatti	... 7.00 "
23- 5-44	Nachchandupatti	... 7.00 "	"	Rangiyam	... 7.30 "
"	Virachchilai	... 7.30 "			

RECRUITING—ADVERTISEMENT—4 p. m.

13— 5—44	Vettamviduthi.	20— 5—44	Ponnamaravathi.
14— 5—44	Virachchilai.	21— 5—44	Tittanviduthi.
16— 5—44	Konapattu.	23— 5—44	Vadakadu.
17— 5—44	Karambakkudi.	24— 5—44	Rayavaram.
18— 5—44	Kulipirai.	25— 5—44	Kilanilai.
19— 5—44	Pudukkottai.	26— 5—44	Pappapatti.

Sri Brihadamba State Press, Pudukkottai. 600—13-5-44.